



Hispanic Population in Arkansas

I, Nelson de Villiers, came to Little Rock in June of 1977 along with my family. I came to this city because my job required it. I work for the National Weather Service within the United States Department of Commerce.

At that time, it was somewhat rare to run into another Hispanic while running errands around town. One time, my wife and I went to the grocery store, and she could not find the cut of meat for making fajitas. I talked to the butcher and asked him, where is the meat for making fajitas? He was surprised and he told me that he had never heard of such a thing! Little by little, I had to get used to doing without tasting the typical Texan meals that my wife cooked with frequency before we came to Little Rock.

Years went by, and I realized gradually that one could hear Spanish being spoken with more frequency while I was in stores and other public places. Every once in a while, I could find more food items geared to the Hispanic taste at the grocery store; but the change was slow.

Then, around 1995, it seemed to me that there was an explosion in the number of Hispanics in the central Arkansas area, not just in Little Rock. I got the same impression also, while going through other parts of the state; mainly in the northwest around Fayetteville, and in Pope and Yell counties.



These observations caught my attention and awakened my curiosity. Because of that, I decided to investigate the matter in a formal fashion. My plan was to find data

about the population in Arkansas in the archives from the census taken every 10 years.

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